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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 2 July 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I must once again call your urgent attention to the dangerous escalation and rising tensions on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, due to the ongoing Israeli aggression and inhumane acts against the Palestinian civilian population.

In grave breach of international law, including its obligations as an occupying Power in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel continues to deliberately launch military raids and attacks, including air strikes, against Palestinian civilian areas, causing loss of life, injury and destruction of civilian homes and properties, and continues to recklessly incite further violence against the Palestinian civilians, resulting in intensifying acts of terror and racist hate crimes by illegal Israeli settlers as well as other Israeli extremists against Palestinian civilians, including children. The international community, especially the Security Council, cannot remain silent as Israel and its terrorist settlers continue with their aggression, wreaking death, destruction and terror on the Palestinian people under its occupation.

In this regard, I regret to inform you that, yesterday, 1 July 2014, at approximately 3.45 a.m. (Palestine time) in the town of Beit Hanina in occupied East Jerusalem, a 16-year-old boy, Mohammed Hussein Abu Khdeir, who was sitting on a wall outside the mosque waiting for dawn prayers that start the daily fast during the holy month of Ramadan, was abducted and later brutally murdered by Israeli extremists. According to witnesses and surveillance cameras, two Israeli settlers pulled up in a grey car and violently forced young Mohammed into their car. A couple of hours later, the body of Mohammed was found in a forested area of the city, his small body burned and showing signs of severe violence perpetrated against him.

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The Palestinian Government condemns in the strongest terms the kidnapping, torture and burning of Mohammed Abu Khdeir by terrorist Israeli settlers. We hold the Israeli Government responsible for this atrocious crime and the culture of impunity in which Israeli terrorist settlers have so vilely and continuously assaulted Palestinian civilians and properties. We call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to clearly and unequivocally condemn the brutal kidnapping and killing of Mohammed.

Moreover, the Security Council must call on Israel, the occupying Power, to act immediately and tangibly to cease all violations against the Palestinian people, including all acts of collective punishment and reprisals, including incitement of reprisals, which are prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Security Council has a responsibility to contribute to the de-escalation of this grave situation, including by demonstrating its commitment to universal human rights by publicly condemning this latest crime by Israeli terrorist settlers, calling for respect of international law and calling for restraint. Israel, the occupying Power, which bears full responsibility for placing its civilians on Occupied Palestinian Territory, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, must also unequivocally condemn this heinous act and hold the perpetrators accountable and bring them to justice.

The killing of Mohammed is not the only attempt by Israeli terrorist settlers to cause death and injury to the unprotected Palestinian civilian population. In this regard, just 24 hours before Mohammed's brutal killing, terrorist settlers kidnapped and assaulted 8-year-old Musa Zalom in Jerusalem, who was saved by Palestinian civilians in the neighbourhood. Also, 9-year-old Sanabel Al-Tous remains in critical condition after an Israeli settler ran her over with his car and threw her little body on the side of the road, leaving her there to die.

Such horrific acts by terrorist Israeli settlers come amidst an outburst of virulent anti-Arab racism in Israel, fuelled by the direct incitement and declarations by Israeli government officials against the Palestinian people. In this connection, I must draw your attention to the fact that hundreds of Israelis rampaged through the streets of Jerusalem yesterday, violently assaulting at least five Palestinians, while chanting hateful and violent slogans such as "death to Arabs". At least two other Palestinians were physically assaulted by Israelis in hate crime incidents in other parts of Jerusalem in this escalating environment of violence.

Moreover, Israeli occupying forces have been relentlessly carrying out vicious acts of military aggression against the Palestinian population, committing wide-scale violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, including blatant measures of collective punishment. Yesterday, 1 July 2014, in the early morning hours, Israeli warplanes bombed more than 35 so-called "targets" in the besieged Gaza Strip, where more than 1.7 million Palestinians have been imprisoned for eight years under Israel's illegal, immoral blockade. This latest barrage of airstrikes caused destruction to civilian property and infrastructure and intensified fear and panic among the Palestinian civilian population, where more than 50 per cent are children under 18 years of age.

The occupying forces also continued apace with the military aggression against the Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank. Israeli occupying forces demolished the family homes belonging to the two Palestinians whom Israel has accused of allegedly carrying out the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli settlers.

All such measures taken by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied State of Palestine are clearly a part of the collective punishment policy and reprisals against Palestinian civilians in violation of article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates: "No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed."

The grave situation before us requires urgent attention and serious action by the international community before the situation on the ground further destabilizes and unravels. The Security Council must uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It must reaffirm its rejection of all Israel's criminal acts and illegal, violent and provocative actions taken against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Moreover, it must be recalled that the Palestinian people who are so gravely suffering under Israel's more than 47-year military occupation are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. We thus reiterate that the international community, including the Security Council, cannot remain silent or continue only expressing regret or disappointment with Israel's violations. It is the responsibility of the international community to put an end to these crimes by the occupying Power and this begins with holding Israel accountable for all of its actions in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Palestinian people cannot remain the exception to this responsibility to protect civilians from such atrocities and flagrant breaches of the law.

This letter is in follow-up to our 500 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 30 June 2014 (A/ES-10/633-S/2014/455) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations